

**FISCAL NOTE**  
**SB 2496 - HB 2759**

February 19, 2004

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** Requires the State Board of Education to promulgate by July 1, 2005, separate weight standards for textbooks used by pupils in elementary schools, in middle schools, and in high schools. In promulgating such standards, the board shall give due consideration to the health risks to elementary school pupils, middle school pupils and high school pupils who must transport textbooks to and from school each day.

**ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:**

**Other Fiscal Impact - The fiscal impact will depend on the standards developed. Estimate assumes some textbooks will have to be divided into multiple volumes at the time of reprinting resulting in an increase in state and local government expenditures. The amount of increased expenditures cannot be determined but is estimated to exceed \$900,000 to the state and \$300,000 to local governments\*, which assumes that a minimum of 10% of the textbooks would have to be divided into multiple volumes at an increase in cost of 20%.**

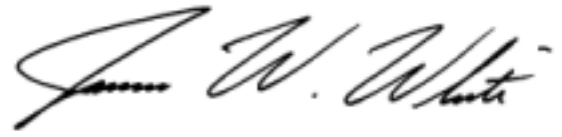
Estimate assumes:

- Local school systems currently spend approximately \$60,000,000 per year for textbooks. Assuming at least 10% would have to be divided into multiple volumes in order to meet the new guidelines, at an increase in cost of 20%, the additional cost for textbooks is estimated to be \$1,200,000. (If one-half or 50% of these books would have to be divided into multiple volumes in order to meet guidelines at a 20% increase in costs, the additional cost for textbooks would be approximately \$6,000,000.)
- As current textbooks are renewed and new textbooks are approved and purchased in the normal course of business, weight standards will be used as a criteria to determine, on a textbook by textbook basis, which textbooks meet the weight standards and are eligible for purchase.
- Any costs to the State Board of Education to review and develop a policy on weight standards for textbooks is estimated to be not significant and can be handled within existing resources.
- Even though each approved textbook may come within the required weight standard set out by the State Board of Education, the weight of the individual books needed for class each day may collectively still be considered excessive.
- Limiting the weight of a student's load to a fixed percentage of his/her body weight would result in some students only being able to carry a limited number of books at one time.
- Students carry a number of items other than textbooks, which contributes to the weight of backpacks.
- To the extent certain textbooks that are required for use in specific courses do not meet the weight standards and two or more volumes must be purchased rather than one volume, or more expensive textbooks must be purchased because existing textbooks do meet the weight standard, local government expenditures are expected to increase.

\*Article II, Section 24 of the Tennessee Constitution provides that: *no law of general application shall impose increased expenditure requirements on cities or counties unless the General Assembly shall provide that the state share in the cost.*

**CERTIFICATION:**

This is to duly certify that the information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James W. White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "W".

James W. White, Executive Director